Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
HA-05 AID-05 IO-13 TRSE-00 OMB-01 XMB-02 EB-08
MCT-02 /104 W
----------102505 042210Z /14
R 041947Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6848

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 6058

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, SHUM, AR, US

REF: BUENOS AIRES 6025

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED FOREIGN MINISTER MONTES
DESCRIBED RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES AS "NORMAL"
IN AN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN CLARIN AUGUST 3.
A FREE TRANSLATION OF HIS REMARKS ON RELATIONS WITH
THE US AND THE US HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY FOLLOWS:

2. "RELATIONS WITH THE US CONTINUE NORMAL. THEY ARE
NOT OPTIMAL AT THE MOMENT, BUT THEY CONTINUE TO BE
NORMAL. THE SITUATION WITH THE US, HAVING DROPPED FROM
EXCELLENT TO NORMAL, SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN AS REFLECTING
A PERMANENT SITUATION. IT IS A CURRENT SITUATION WHICH
THE US AS WELL AS ARGENTINA SHOULD TRY TO BRING BACK
TO THE OPTIMUM LEVEL. IN NO WAY CAN IT BE SAID THAT
RELATIONS ARE TENSE OR COOLED. THAT WOULD BE TANTAMOUNT
TO SAYING THAT ARGENTINA AND THE US ARE GOING THROUGH A
VERY DIFFICULT PERIOD IN BILATERAL RELATIONS, WHICH IS NOT TRUE."

3. ASKED WHETHER BILATERAL RELATIONS WOULD CONTINUE TO
WORSEN, MONTES REPLIED THAT "THE PRESENT STAGE WOULD PASS
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AND THAT THE MOMENT WOULD ARRIVE WHEN RELATIONS WOULD BE
ONCE AGAIN EXCELLENT."

4. ASKED TO DEFINE US INTERVENTION IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF
OTHER COUNTRIES AND WHETHER IT WOULD BE TEMPORARY OR
PERMANENT, MONTES REPLIED: "WE MAINTAIN THE PRINCIPLE OF
NON-INTERVENTION IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS, WHICH IS WHY, AS I

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HAVE SAID, RELATIONS WITH THE US HAVE FALLEN FROM OPTIMAL TO NORMAL. ARGENTINA WILL NOT ACCEPT INTERFERENCE OF ANOTHER COUNTRY IN ITS INTERNAL AFFAIRS. I BELIEVE THAT THE US HAS A DIFFERENT DEFINITION WITH RESPECT TO WHAT NON-INTERVENTION MEANS. FOR ME, THE DEFINITION IS CLEAR. NOTHING THAT AFFECTS THE INTERNAL SITUATION OF OTHER COUNTRIES CAN BE SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION IN FOREIGN POLICY. THE US HAS A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT INTERPRETATION, BUT I SHOULD MAKE IT CLEAR THAT WHEN I SPEAK OF NON-INTERVENTION IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS, I AM REFERRING TO ALL COUNTRIES AND NOT JUST THE US. ARGENTINA WILL NOT PERMIT INTERVENTION FROM OTHER COUNTRIES IN ITS INTERNAL AFFAIRS. ON THE OTHER HAND, I BELIEVE THAT THIS MATTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS HAS AFFECTED OPTIMAL RELATIONS WITH THE US. I BELIEVE THAT IF THE US COMES TO UNDERSTAND ARGENTINA, THE SITUATION WOULD BEGIN TO IMPROVE RAPIDLY. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT WE SHOULD NOT CONSIDER BILATERAL RELATIONS TO BE TENSE, BUT SIMPLY THAT THEY HAVE FALLEN FROM OPTIMAL TO NORMAL."

5. ASKED ABOUT CARTER'S HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY, MONTES SAID: "I WOULD SAY THAT FROM MY POINT OF VIEW THIS POLICY SUFFERS THE SERIOUS PROBLEM OF GENERALIZATION. ONE CANNOT GENERALIZE ALL COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD UNDER ONE ISSUE: NEITHER HUMAN RIGHTS, IDEOLOGY, OR INTERNAL SITUATION, BECAUSE BY GENERALIZING ONE DOES NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE PARTICULAR-ITIES OF EACH COUNTRY: WHAT IS THIS COUNTRY LIKE IN TERMS
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OF ITS IDIOSYNCRACIES, RELIGIONS, LIFESTYLE. FOR THIS REASON, I THINK THE US HAS ERRED IN THIS RESPECT AND FOR THIS WE ASK FOR UNDERSTANDING. ALL GENERALIZATION, IN INTERNAL POLICY AS MUCH AS FOREIGN POLICY AND IN THE CASE OF INDIVIDUALS, IS DANGEROUS. IF THE US UNDERSTOOD ARGENTINA, ITS IDIOSYNCRASIES, LIFESTYLE, IT WOULD RAPIDLY MODIFY WHAT IT UNDERSTANDS TO BE VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS. I HAVE REPEATED ON MANY OCCASIONS THAT THE ONLY VIOLATORS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ARE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISTS. ARGENTINA IS A COUNTRY THAT FOR MANY YEARS HAD HAD A TRADITION OF RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. AND IN THIS AREA, I THINK WE COULD TEACH A NUMBER OF OTHER COUNTRIES, INCLUDING OTHERS MORE ADVANCED THAN WE."

6. ASKED TO AMPLIFY ON THE "ADJUSTMENTS" WHICH PRESIDENT VIDELA SAID IN HIS AUGUST 2 RADIO-TV ADDRESS MIGHT BE NECESSARY TO MAKE IN TERMS OF FOREIGN POLICY, MONTES SAID HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT THE PRESIDENT HAD IN MIND. "PERHAPS,

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
HA-05 AID-05 IO-13 TRSE-00 OMB-01 XMB-02 EB-08
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 6058

HE SAID, THE PRESIDENT IN SOME WAY HAS HIS OWN IDEA
ABOUT CHANGING SOME OF THE PHILOSOPHIES WE ARE APPLYING
IN FOREIGN POLICY." MONTES WAS ALSO ASKED HOW MUCH LONGER
HE THOUGHT HE WOULD REMAIN AS FOREIGN MINISTER. MONTES
REPLIED THAT THIS WAS UP TO THE PRESIDENT. END UNCLASSIFIED

7. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL

COMMENT: WHEN MONTES' REMARKS WERE ISSUED, WE TOOK THEM
AS A HOPEFUL SIGN, AS THEY WERE SPOKEN AGAINST A BACKGROUND
OF CONTINUING OFFICIAL GOA ANIMOSITY TOWARDS THE US BECAUSE
OF THE EXIM BANK DECISION AND A NEW WAVE OF EMOTIONALISM
FOLLOWING THE MURDER OF ADMIRAL LAMBRUSCHINI'S DAUGHTER.
THAT MONTES COULD STILL STATE IN PUBLIC THAT RELATIONS WITH
THE US WERE "NORMAL" AND MIGHT EVEN IMPROVE, SUGGESTED TO US
THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WAS NOT PREPARED TO ADMIT TO THE
ARGENTINE PEOPLE THAT US-ARGENTINE RELATIONS HAD REACHED A
DEAD END. LAST NIGHT, HOWEVER, THE FOREIGN MINISTER ISSUED
THE AMBASSADOR A DIPLOMATIC NOTE (REFTEL) BLAMING THE USG
FOR THE DETERIORATION IN BILATERAL RELATIONS, THE TONE OF
WHICH WAS MORE IN SORROW AND ANGER, BUT WHICH CONTAINS THE
USUAL LITANY ABOUT INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF
A SOVEREIGN NATION. (THE NOTE NEVERTHELESS ENDS WITH AN
EXPRESSION OF HOPE FOR US UNDERSTANDING AND AN IMPROVEMENT
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IN RELATIONS.) WE ARE NOT CERTAIN ABOUT THE PORTENT OF THIS
NOTE. ONE ELEMENT THAT SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE WEIGHED IS
THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE'S RECENT COUNSEL TO THE AMBASSADOR

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NOT TO TAKE THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S HARD LINE TOO
SERIOUSLY. YET YESTERDAY'S NOTE MUST HAVE
BEEN AUTHORIZED BY JUNTA, OR AT LEAST THE PRESIDENT.
MONTES TOLD THE AMBASSADOR YESTERDAY THAT ANTI-US FEELING
RAN STRONG AND DEEP AT THE LAMBRUSCHINI FUNERAL (IN THEIR
PRESENT FRAME OF MIND MANY OFFICIAL ARGENTINES BELIEVE
THAT OUR PROMOTION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS CAUSE IS AIMED AT
CODDLING TERORISTS, OR WORSE.). HOWEVER, MONTES SAID,
THE GOA WISHED TO AVOID INFLAMING PUBLIC ANIMUS AGAINST
THE US. ONE TEST OF MONTES' SINCERITY WILL BE WHETHER
AND WITH WHAT DEGREE OF NEWSPLAY AND EDITORIAL COMMENT,
THE CONTENTS OF THE MINISTRY'S NOTE LEAKS TO THE PRESS
TODAY. END CONFIDENTIAL.
CASTRO

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